REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 7, 2005 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claim 11 has been added. Claim 8 has been redrafted into independent form. Claims 1-11 are pending, the independent claims being 1, 4, 8 and 10. Claims 4, 7, 8 and 10 are amended. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

The objection to claims 7-9 for improper form is believed to have been overcome by amendment.

Claims 1-6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,549,627 to Rasmusson et al. ("Rasmusson").

Claim 1 recites, "for each of the input signals an individual processing history of adaptive echo cancelling data is kept and combined with current adaptive beamforming data."

The Office Action cites FIGs. 5 and 6. FIG. 6 features a fixed beamformer (see FIG. 6), rather than an adaptive beamformer (see also, col. 6, lines 1 and 24-29).

Likewise, the input signals to microphones 405, 407 in FIG. 5 are among said "each of the input signals," at least because the input signals to microphones 405, 407 in FIG. 5 are different and distinct from the input signals to microphones 405, 407 in FIG. 4 (col. 4, lines 24-25; col. 5, lines 8 and 9).

However, the FIG. 5 signals are, at best, subject merely to fixed echo canceling (FIG. 5, ref. nos. 413, 415).

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For at least this reason, the cited reference fails to anticipate the present invention as recited in claim 1.

Claim 4, as amended, recites, "the beamformer and canceller being configured for <u>simultaneously</u> adaptive operation." Support for the amendment of claim 4 is found in the specification (e.g., page 1, line 22; page 6, lines 7-8). FIGs. 4 and 5 of the cited reference, by contrast, constitute two <u>temporally separate</u> steps of a process.

Claim 8 continues to recite, "the adaptive filter comprises a <u>first</u> section for calculating at least one loudspeaker input spectrum and a part of <u>normalized update data</u>, and a <u>second</u> section for performing convolution and calculating <u>echo cancelling coefficient update data</u>."

The cited reference fails to disclose or suggest this feature of claim 8, and the Office Action, and the prior Office Action, do not say otherwise.

Claim 10 has been amended to include the same language added to claim 4, and is likewise deemed to be patentable over the cited reference.

Each of the other rejected claims, each depends from a respective base claim and is deemed to distinguish patentably over the cited reference for at least the same reason(s) set forth above with regard to the base claim.

Claim 11 is similar to the language added to claims 4 and 8, and is also regarded as patentable.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all the present claims are patentable in view of the cited references. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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